

Russians Say Antimissile Sytem Will Protect Them From Attack

**Two Generals Imply Defense
Rules Out Need for Pact
Proposed by Johnson**

MOSCOW, Feb. 20 (AP)—Soviet military leaders asserted today that the Soviet Union had developed an antiballistic missile system that would protect it from attack.

The assertions were accompanied by further indications that the Kremlin had no interest in President Johnson's proposed United States-Soviet agreement to stop development of antiballistic missile systems.

Gen. Pavel F. Batitsky, a Deputy Defense Minister, said the antiaircraft troops he commands "can reliably protect the country territory from an enemy attack by air."

Gen. Pavel A. Kurochkin, head of the Frunze Military Academy, said missiles fired at the Soviet Union would never reach their targets.

Missiles 'No Problem'

"Detecting missiles in time and destroying them in flight is no problem," General Kurochkin said in reply to questions about the Soviet system.

His remarks at a news conference and General Batitsky's interview with the press agency Tass were in anticipation of Thursday's celebration of the 49th anniversary of the Soviet army and navy.

They represented an apparent new confidence about the capacity of the country to defend itself against missiles armed with nuclear warheads.

The argument used by Washington has been that the systems would mean wasting billions of dollars on both sides, since despite them intercontinental ballistic missiles could still cause catastrophic destruction.

Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin said in London 10 days ago that the Soviet antimissile system was "designed not to kill people but to preserve human lives."

"I believe that defense systems, which prevent attack, are not the cause of the arms race but constitute a factor preventing the death of people," he said.

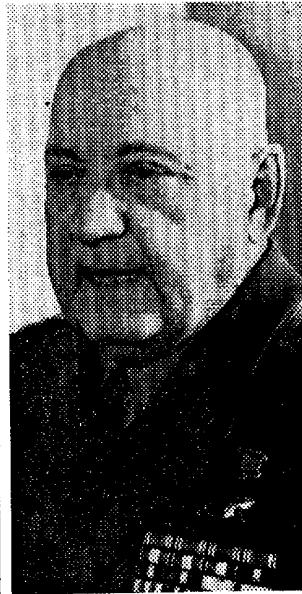
Offer Not Rejected

Premier Kosygin did not explicitly reject President Johnson's proposal.

The generals' assertion that enemy missiles would not reach their targets was not limited in any way.

Mr. Johnson had mentioned an antimissile system around Moscow and other reports told of widespread construction of bases in the Soviet Union. But there had been no report in the West that the Soviet Union could protect all of its vast territory.

The positions taken by Soviet



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Gen. Pavel A. Kurochkin as he said that missiles fired at Soviet Union would not reach their destinations.

military leaders were considered sure to add to pressure in Washington for the United States to push ahead with its own system. The Defense Department has warned that there would be no alternative if the Soviet Union persisted with the development of its system.